

## OUR SOCIAL CHAT

All letters intended for this department should be addressed to "Aunt Jennie," care of The Progressive Farmer, Raleigh, N. C.

### Aunt Jennie's Letter.

Our letter from Elizabeth, who lives in the stricken city of Baltimore, is of especial interest just now. We are indeed thankful that there were so few casualties in that terrible fire, and that our correspondent and her household escaped unscathed.

We thank you, Ruby, for your helpful letter. I have seen a portiere made of different colors of corn, and it was pretty. The grains are varnished to prevent the onslaught of insects, mice, etc.

Amorette, yours is a subject that elicits much anxious thought, and we trust that your energy and perseverance will cause some other mother to try to go with the little folks on Sunday mornings.

Eva is with us this week, and we are glad. Yes, my dear girl, our Judge does not live on earth, but our highest ambition should be so to live that our consciences are void of offence toward God and man.

We have indeed turned over a new leaf in our department and hope to have the page full of our Chat each week. None of you realize how I appreciate your efforts in this direction. Many of the "charter members" have and are returning, and new talkers are asking for seats with us, all of which makes my heart glad.

Ruby's letter strikes us with remarkable force, for it is helpful. How many hundreds of women there are in North Carolina capable of writing letters equally helpful and yet who never think of contributing to our department! They simply dream dreams and let time fly. Experience is a good teacher, but oftentimes the tuition is too high. We go one day, burn our fingers and maybe stay at home a life-time to nurse the burns. There is a right and wrong way to do everything. All must learn that the right way is always the easy way. I was teaching some girls to sew not long since and had some difficulty in convincing them that it was easier to turn down a hem with the goods next to you, but after they learned it they seemed astonished at their former ignorance. Now this is the case with so many of us housekeepers. Why, only this morning I found a sheet that had split down the middle, and a neighbor coming in just then, I asked her what she did with them when they showed a tendency to split that way. "Why, I turn the outsides in and hem the edges," was her reply. Now while this was not very explicit to a person who knows nothing of how to sew, to those of us who do know it meant a great deal of worry and labor saved and thus it is with regard to your letters to us. Your experiences may not interest or help all who read our Chat but it is safe to say that some one will be helped by it.

The award in the "Gordon Keith" prize contest will be announced next week, the difficulty in reaching a decision making it necessary to leave the matter open another week.

AUNT JENNIE.

### Household Affairs.

Dear Aunt Jennie:—I knock once more for admittance to Social Chat. I will not, however, compete for the prize on how best to improve the Progressive Farmer, as I do not see any actual need of improving, just so they still give us "our corner" and the Sunshine Department. If I am not too busy, I read from cover to cover, including all articles on farming. I wish Harry Farmer would give us more of his views on gardening; his letters are full of common sense.

I wish to tell the Chatterers of a novel portiere I saw directions for making recently. It is too late now to make one, but some one may wish to

try it this fall: Take acorns,—yes, the seemingly almost useless acorns—big and little, and all colors, from the bright green to sober brown; as sort them as to size and color, then string them and hang on a rod and presto! you have a very simple but withal a very pretty portiere.

Do the Chatterers realize the many and varied uses (besides Harry Farmer's suggestions) to which old newspapers may be put? In my home there is a constant accumulation which I do not care to save for reference, and so I use them for every possible thing I can; for instance, putting on the kitchen table in cleaning a chicken to lay all the refuse; when through, paper and contents are consigned to the fire, thus saving several steps in going to throw them away and much washing of table and other articles used in such an operation. If any of you use an old fashioned dasher churn you know it is almost impossible to keep from splashing some milk on the floor. Just try pinning a folded newspaper around the churn, allowing paper to come up above top of churn, and see how nicely it catches and absorbs all the "splashes."

There are many other uses for them besides giving the surplus to people too poor (?) to have any papers, but I will stop at this, after telling the Chatterers of a request and an answer I saw in another paper recently. The writer asked for a recipe for making mush! Now do not laugh, please, but listen to the answer: "Make a batter of meal and cold water and pour into boiling salted water." Well, what of that? you say. Why, simply this, friends, do you know there is really a great difference in the taste of so simple a thing as mush according to how it is made? Now our grandmothers (or at least mine) always sifted the dry meal from the left hand into the not quite boiling salted water, stirring constantly. And if there should be a few lumps pour a little cold water in and it will take out all lumps.

RUBY.

Mecklenburg Co., N. C.

### An Eye-Witness of the Baltimore Fire.

Dear Aunt Jennie:—Now that the holidays are all over, I will try to write once again to the Chat. I have just finished reading The Progressive Farmer of February 9th, and enjoyed the letters so much, especially the letter from the student of the Normal and Industrial College describing the fire. I will not try to describe the fire which raged in Baltimore for two days and nights. I have never been in such an excitement before. The fire started on Sunday morning and in spite of the efforts of firemen from Washington, Philadelphia, Wilmington, (Del.), Atlantic City, New York, and our own companies, continued to rage until Tuesday afternoon before it was under control.

To-day our beloved city is a mass of ruins with thousands of poor people out of work. Strong men wept as they saw building after building fall—and still no hope of stopping the fire until the main portion of our city was one heap of ashes and debris. I watched the large Baltimore & Ohio office fall with a crash to the ground. Then followed banks, express offices, wholesale houses, trust buildings, and all our newspaper offices, quickly destroyed by the fire. At two o'clock Monday morning, after a long fight, the place that gave me employment for the past three years, fell to the ground. This alone was enough to almost unnerve me, for like many others, I had become attached to the place where I had spent so many hours. The fire spread on and on, burning theaters, private houses, and leaving only desolation and ruin behind. In all our large city we had no cars on Monday or early Tuesday morning as the large power house was also destroyed by fire during Sunday night. Saloons are all closed, the regulars are on duty with hundreds of special police from other cities.

Cousins, try to imagine what our city looks

like to-night. But with all our sorrow and troubles it is a great pleasure and comfort to see how nobly other cities came to our aid, offering firemen, police, money or anything that they could do for us. The city is indeed in a destitute condition when we think of the poor and suffering who are without work and who lost all their earthly belongings in the fire.

I will not chat longer now for fear of becoming tiresome. Much love for Aunt Jennie and the cousins.

ELIZABETH.

Baltimore, Md.

### From Eva Plamondon.

Dear Aunt Jennie:—I was so glad to know that I have not been forgotten by you. I owe you many thanks for your gentle reminder of my neglect, for since my dear father died I have not written you a line, for which I am heartily ashamed, as he often asked me not to give up "Our Social Column."

I hope the dear Cousins who used to mention "Eva" in their letters, have not quite forgotten their lonely little cousin. So many times since papa died, I have thought of you all, and thought of writing for only a word of sympathy and love. I felt so desolate, so lonely. Rest assured, I have not forgotten any of you, either in my prayers or in remembrance.

Cousins, I am so glad that winsome, lovely spring time is on its flowery way to us. Though I love all the seasons, spring is my favorite. I trust that no heart on earth is so burdened with sorrow or disgrace, that spring will not grant them peace and forgetfulness of their pain. After all, dear hearts, nothing on earth—sickness, misfortunes, loss of friends, reputation, even death itself, cannot take (or should not) the joy of life and living, on God's beautiful earth away from us if only we keep our hearts pure and tender, our souls white and spotless, and our conscience clear—clear as the sparkling mountain streams that flow through fragrant meadows and bending willows in spring time. If I had never known sorrow in my young life, I would not be so assured of this; but, I have been tried, most bitterly tried, ever since my last letter, and though I miss "the touch of the vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still," and I weep sometimes in secret and silence and alone, for the tenderness and "petting" that I love so well, but is mine no more, still there is a strange mystical feeling in my tender heart that God has some sweet, noble, womanly work here for me to do, tender, sensitive, and weak as I am. It may not be any great heroic deed; I rather think it is the sweet, beautiful domestic life that He has in store for me, and in which I shall be so happy.

We are here to make the world brighter, purer, better, because of our little share in it, by our influence, which is always felt, be it ever so small and humble. We are here to love and be loved, and to be so lovable that we compel love—love of the very highest, purest type; holy, tender, joyous. We are here to cheer, comfort, and bless, to laugh and be happy with the glad, to soothe and console and pray for the sorrowful, to be gentle and thoughtful with the aged, and to smooth with soft, tender hands the care lines from their brows. We are here to kiss and fondle, dear girls, the dear innocent children; to romp with them, play with them, and, at night, when peaceful stars shine in God's dome, and the sun has set low and gorgeous beneath the western hills, and the little dimpled hands and bright baby eyes are tired, we must fold the pretty hands and whisper the sweet, trusting, childish prayers to them, to repeat after us, in soft lisping tones, that our mothers taught us not so long ago, to us, dear girls. What can be sweeter or nobler than a young girl, sweet and pure, teaching a child its prayers? Does it not bring us wondering sacred thoughts of the untrod golden future that lies before them?

Ah! we are here for so many things good and true. And, remember our aim in all we do, in every simple act, must be to please God, to worship Him. Let this be our earnest endeavor, all who read these simple lines: Keep your heart pure, your conscience clear, and our heritage shall be true hearts to love us here, and eternal love hereafter.

EVA PLAMONDON.

Buncombe Co., N. C.